

Journey in Faith

Via de Cristo

of Eastern Pennsylvania and
Northern Delaware



Quarterly Newsletter – Winter 2021

Musings from the Lay Director:

Welcome to our first ever newsletter! The Secretariat/Board for Journey in Faith wanted to offer this as a quarterly newsletter to communicate news in a different fashion about what we are doing and what events are happening within the Journey in Faith community. We hope and pray that it will be of some benefit to you.

So, a couple of things to note from the board:

1. Our **Board** recently changed our **meeting dates** from the 3rd Saturday of each calendar quarter to the **1st Saturday of each calendar quarter**. We are currently meeting via Zoom. When we do meet in person again - we usually meet at the Union Barrel Works located in Reamstown, PA. Just to note - **ANYONE can attend** a board meeting at any time as a guest. You are welcome to attend on zoom as well. Just let me know and I'll be certain to get the information to you.
2. Thanks to everyone for their uplifting of prayers and contributions for our weekend host: Camp Innabah. We received \$1,525 in donations and with our anonymous matching donor will be sending them a check for \$2,525.00!
3. **Ultreyas** will continue to be held **via Zoom through April**. They are on the **2nd Saturday of each month at 4pm**. Please plan to attend as we catch up with each other, hear a Fourth Day speaker and discuss our thoughts about what we heard.
4. We are still discussing holding a Fall Weekend this October. Mark Hammond has agreed to be our Rector. Watch your email and the newsletter for information from Mark concerning team details.

If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding the Journey in Faith community and the board operations, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any other board member.

Remember.....

God Loves You and so do I!!

Amy Ewbank
Lay Director

From the Desk of the Spiritual Director...

What would we do without technology?! Before I officially retired in 2015, the church was encouraging use of technology as means of reaching more people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. To be honest, I wasn't looking to increase my technological skills (I remember over 25 years ago wondering why I needed to use email!!) ...and then the pandemic hit, and we now had to embrace a whole new normal! I give thanks every day for the members of the congregation I now serve as Transition Pastor for, their commitment to use and enhance the technology to keep members connected and do outreach, as well as for what I have learned alongside them.

I have enjoyed technology that helps keep me connected to friends and family, school friends and college roommates, colleagues I know and others who serve in the church across the country. I enjoy social media that keeps me in touch with those far away. I am careful in what I post, of course, as people do know that I am a pastor, but first a Christian! Careful use of social media is one more way we can be "apostolic" in our action, asking what Jesus might say in what we post or how we respond to others when they are struggling, grieving, having trouble dealing with what is happening around them.

The pandemic certainly has impacted the Journey in Faith *Via de Cristo* community, whose hallmark has been being a *presence*, a tangible channel of God's unconditional love and grace. While it is evident that we will not be gathering anytime soon for in-person fellowship, let alone offering the weekend experience for others, our monthly ZOOM gatherings are a blessing! Some have found it to be a way to meet weekly, as well, to encourage each other in these times (my group uses the free format). We get to see each other and share how things are going personally and/or in our congregations (always good to share ideas!). The format has obviously adapted a bit but seeing each other is such a blessing!

I do hope more of us will take advantage of this way to gather...either on a device with a camera or by phone. Mark your calendars for the 2nd Saturday of the month...usually 4pm. Join the group at 4, join later, leave early if you need to, but do join as often as you can because we do need each other for encouragement! You can just listen if you wish. And don't forget that we are not an exclusive group—you can invite friends to join your weekly group or the monthly gathering. We just need the "virtual" experience of being the Body of Christ with sisters and brother in Christ and those who might be searching for connection with Christ.

The prophet Isaiah [43.19 NRSV] reminds us that God is always "doing a new thing" to reach and guide us in all times, normal or challenging. May we be open to the new things God is doing among us to keep us hopeful and inspired to do our part in the mission to which we have been called! The peace of the Lord be with you!

Your Sister in Christ,
Pastor Diane LaFauci

JiF Treasure's Report for 2020

As of 12/31/2020 Journey in Faith has 5 separate funds:

The **General Fund** is used for all non-restricted donation and corresponding expenditure.

The other 4 Fund are restricted or temporarily restricted for certain projects; they are:

Temporary Restricted Songbook Revision Fund - This fund is restricted for the songbook revision project, any remaining funds will go to the general fund at the completion of the project.

Restricted Trailer Fund - This fund is restricted for trailer expenses.

Restricted Scholarship Fund - This fund is user for Candidates and/or Team Members who need financial help to cover the recommended donation for weekend costs.

Restricted for Camp Innabah - This is a new Fund in 2020 to help the Camp with donations from our members. All the donated money in this Fund will be sent to the Camp in early 2021.

For the year ending 12/31/2020 the General Fund we received \$486.96, mainly from Thrivent Choice Dollars and we had disbursements of \$2,092.07 for a loss in the General Fund of \$1,605.11. As you can see, even with our Weekend cancelled, Journey in Faith still has expenses the Organization must cover each year.

There was no activity in the Temporary Songbook Fund, the Restricted Trailer Fund, or the Restricted Scholarship Fund, leaving the year end balances at \$2,000.00, \$183.35 and \$4,270.79 respectively.

In the new Restricted Camp Innabah Fund through 12/31/2020 we received donations of \$2,525 and so far in 2021, we received \$250 for a total of \$2,775 which will be sent to the camp.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Barnett
JiF Treasurer

Outreach Coordinator:

Frequently when we hear about outreach, we think of recruiting pilgrims for the next weekend. Well, that is a small part of it. Overall, we to spread the message that God loves us so much that He died so we could be forgiven and live with him. Outreach isn't only about recruiting additional pilgrims; it's about building up the people that make up the body of Christ.

Don't get me wrong, getting people to the weekend to encourage and equip them to better spread the good news is a great thing. And, there are two fields for outreach:

- a) from you individually or your reunion group into your community and
- b) into new communities.

The best way to encourage people to come to a weekend is like Nathaniel did: "Come see". And, if you'd like help with getting them on board, give me a shout. I'd like to help.

Another way you can help is letting me know people or particularly pastors you know from other congregations. We need to constantly be reaching out to these other communities to help

Jif Co-Ed#15 Rector:

It's hard to know at this point it is difficult to know whether we will be able to have team meetings over the summer and a weekend in the fall. I'll keep you updated as best we can project what is going to happen.

In the meantime, it can feel like we are just idling or hiding out until the storm passes. Allow me to remind you that we are not called to hide our faith. God calls us to be the light and salt of this world! Do not be overcome with gloom or the fear of death to this world. Be the enthusiasm and joy that others need to hear and see at this time. Reach out to others, even those you don't usually interact with. They need to hear and see through your confidence and faith that God has everything in control.

How can we know that? Simple: "I KNOW MY REDEEMER LIVES." And, if you ever doubt; pray; He will encourage you.

In Peace,
Mark Hammond
JiF Co-Ed#15 Rector

God spread the good news to more people through those who start as a pilgrim in our journey of faith.

So that begs the question, "Who is a good pilgrim?" We are especially looking for those that are or could be leaders in their communities. We'd like to stir them to be even better leaders in spreading God's good news. It's what this world is desperate to hear.

Pray first and let me know about any contacts you or I could pursue. Then, encourage good pilgrim candidates to be ready for whenever we will have a weekend.

In Peace,
Mark Hammond
JiF Outreach Coordinator

Remembering the meaning of Palanca

Palanca is a Spanish word which means lever. A lever is used to lift a load or to overcome resistance. In the Cursillo movement, we use the word PALANCA as an expression of one's love, prayers, or kind deeds for another person. These acts of kindness could change a person's whole life; God does answer our prayers in his own way and in his own time. Palanca can come in many forms. It may come as letters, cards, phone calls and small gifts. As the Covid 19 pandemic continues to influence and change our lives; let each of us, sometime this week, reach out to someone in our personal or professional world and insert a lever in their lives.

Your Sister in Christ,
Terry Fry
JiF Palanca Coordinator

ULTREYA!!!

Ultreyas are monthly gatherings for all who have attended a Via de Cristo weekend and those who are interested to learn more about the weekend. **Through April 2021** these gatherings will continue to meet **via Zoom**. **Join us the second Saturday of each month from 4 - 5:30** for a time of sharing and a 4th day talk (a short talk on an aspect of how God is engaging the speaker since his/her weekend) followed by a time for discussion. Just click on the link provided in the Journey in Faith monthly email Ultreya reminder.

Sincerely,
Jim Fosket
JiF 4th Day Coordinator

A New Year's invitation from Marian Lefevre, a member of Journey in Faith community

Life has become "curiouser" and "curiouser"; a word first used by Alice in Wonderland describing the strange, unfamiliar, and ever-changing world in which she found herself. Perhaps you can also relate to Alice at this time in which we are living. I know I can! Curiouser and curiouser.

Recently, I have been pondering Romans 8:28 – "All things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose." This I believe as I recount passed times when this truth was evident in my life. Not that I completely understand how it works or exactly when it will manifest but I believe and know it has and does happen. I just have to stay the course.

Staying grounded in God's word is one way we can stay the course. Hebrews 13:8 – "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" reminds me that when the world around me is swirling in many and strange ways I/we have a true center in Jesus Christ our Lord, our Anchor and our Rock.

Another scripture which I find most helpful is: "Greater is He who is in you, than he who is on the world" from 1 John 4:4. As children of God and by the indwelling of Holy Spirit the evil forces have no claim on us. That is true and good news because Jesus Christ is our Savior, our Shield and our Defender.

In this evermore, strange, and curious world the story of Abraham comes to mind. Abraham was God's friend who left all he knew because he believed God said he should. The unknown and uncertainty did not paralyze Abraham for still doing what nomads do.... move from place to place. Why...because God said so! Abraham's work was to move.... where? Only God knew. Abraham, like Noah building the ark on dry land, trusted God and was willing to follow. Like the trust Moses had in the guidance of God in the wilderness. They stayed the course and did their work. They were strangers in a new land and at the same time pilgrims on the move. Some might say we are strangers, too, and yet pilgrims who are free to follow Him wherever He leads...regardless.

As strangers in a foreign land and yet pilgrims, what is our work? As Journey in Faith leaders, we all have meaningful work to do. God counts on us to reach others. On whom do you count? My word of encouragement is to stay the course. Work for the coming of God's kingdom today with what we know. Pray regularly for one another. Read God's word and believe it. Reach out to others in safe and caring ways. Realize the familiar and previous methods we have used in the past may not work. Try new and yet simple ways to connect with others. Be creative! Simply make a phone call. Text or email someone. Send them a thinking of you card. Intentionally, plan to gather regularly for worship...streamed or in person. Our strength is greater in numbers of believers...at least 2 or 3. Bravely fight in unfamiliar but creative ways the pervading isolation and loneliness which can cripple or paralyze all of us.

Commit to God in 2021 to regularly "attend" monthly Ultreyas in person (1-5pm), Ultreya Zoom or phone call (4-5:30pm). Get and stay connected to others who love the Lord and who also are willing to try something new but unfamiliar. Reach out to be strengthened and pray for others, too.

How can you get connected? Contact Cathy Hammond (coopatcat82@gmail.com), JiF Communications Coordinator for Journey in Faith. Confirm or update your current contact information...email, cell, or address. You won't want to miss anything God has in mind for the Journey in Faith adventures in 2021. God is nearer than you may think or know. Just stay the course! (Watch out for the rabbit holes – good advice from Alice.)

" You have not been given a spirit of timidity but of love, power and a sound mind" 2 Timothy 1:7.